

Apostrophes

Teaching

Apostrophes are used in possessive nouns, contractions, and some plurals.

Apostrophes in possessives Use an apostrophe to form the possessive of any noun, whether singular or plural. For a singular noun, add 's even if the word ends in s.

Paul's ax Jonas's lever

For plural nouns that end in s, add only an apostrophe.

the carpenters' tools the workers' experience

For plural nouns that do not end in s, add an apostrophe and s.

the men's equipment the deer's trails

Apostrophes in contractions A contraction joins two words by leaving some letters out. Use an apostrophe in a contraction to show where a letter or letters have been left out.

I would --> I'd we will --> we'll they have --> they've she is --> she's

Don't confuse contractions with possessive nouns, which do not contain apostrophes.

it's (contraction, means *it is*) its (possessive, means *belonging to it*)

Apostrophes in plurals Use an apostrophe plus s to form the plurals of letters, numbers, or words referred to as words.

Remember to cross your *t's*.

When I began to read, I read *was's* as *saw's*.

Using Apostrophes

In each sentence below, underline the correct form of the two choices in parentheses.

1. The (levers / lever's) one of the simplest machines.
2. (Who's / Whose) able to name an even simpler one?
3. (Curtis's / Curtis') suggestion is the inclined plane.
4. He says (its / it's) simpler because there (arent / aren't) any moving parts.
5. Anna thinks (there / they're / their) using the term *machine* incorrectly.
6. "(What's / Whats') a machine?" she asks.
7. Her friends look up *machine* in (their / they're) dictionary.
8. (Its / It's) definition is "a device that performs work."
9. I guess (Im / I'm) confused about the (scientists' / scientists) definition of work.
10. While (your / you're) dictionary is open, look up *inclined plane*.
11. Look at that! There are four (*planes* / *plane's*) listed in the dictionary.
12. I think (we're / were) getting somewhere now.
13. (Let's / Lets) try to think of some other simple machines.
14. Is there anyone (whose / who's) willing to help me with this science unit?
15. These (children's / childrens / childrens') books on energy might be helpful.

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More Practice

A. Using Apostrophes Correctly

In each sentence below, underline the word that uses the apostrophe incorrectly or should have an apostrophe but does not. Then write the word correctly on the line.

1. The troopers cars have flashing red lights on the top. _____
2. Theyre going to the store now for their supplies. _____
3. The chorus has it's rehearsal on Tuesday nights. _____
4. We're working through the list, but we're only up to the ms. _____
5. She's sure its going to be all right with her mother. _____
6. Charles' poem was selected for publication in his school's yearbook. _____
7. The five student's parents will be guests of honor. _____
8. Helens car wouldn't start, so she never made it to the game. _____
9. Whos going to the graduates' dinner with you? _____
10. Ive no idea who took your book. _____

B. Using Apostrophes in Possessives

On the lines below, rewrite all the underlined phrases in this paragraph, and replace them with phrases using possessives with apostrophes.

When I was young, I used to play in (1) the workshop of my grandfather, and watch him work. I was fascinated by (2) his tools of the carpenter. When I was older, I'd borrow (3) the bike of my brother and ride wherever new houses were being built. I'd stay out of (4) the way of the men, but I would try to get a close-up look at (5) the equipment of the crew. I knew I wanted carpentry to be (6) the work of my life. For years people kept telling me that construction wasn't (7) the work of a woman, but I didn't believe that. Finally (8) the laws of the nation supported my opinion. It took me a long time, but I finally got (9) my card of a union member. Now I'm eager to encourage (10) the dreams of other girls to do whatever work they like.

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

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Application

A. Proofreading for Use of the Apostrophe

Proofread the paragraph below for errors in the use of apostrophes. If a word uses an apostrophe incorrectly or is lacking a needed apostrophe, cross out the word. Then draw a caret ^ next to the error and write the word correctly above the error.

Have you ever thought of how a carpenters' tools find they're way into art and music? Think of a chisel, for example. It's operation depends on the principle of the inclined plane. Its a carpenter's machine. Yet its also a sculptors' machine. Without the hammer and chisel, they're would be no marble, granite, or wood statues. We would not have Michelangelos *David* or the Native Americans totem poles. The hammer and chisel have they're place in an orchestra, as well. Youll find the hammer in an orchestras' percussion section, and the chisel inside the woodwind's mouthpieces.

B. Using Apostrophes in Writing

First rewrite each phrase below, using a possessive with an apostrophe. Then use your phrases in a paragraph about building a doghouse according to the directions in a magazine.

the dog of my family _____

the size of the dog _____

the directions of the writer _____

the carpentry tools of my father _____

the help of our neighbor _____
